

14 October 1949

MEMORANDUM TO DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Violence during Philippine Elections

CONCLUSIONS

1. In response to your verbal request for information concerning Huk uprisings in the Philippines, the following is submitted:

a. Although demonstrations and violence involving Communist-led Huks or other dissident elements are expected throughout the Philippine Republic before and during the 8 November national elections, a general uprising is considered unlikely.

b. US citizens in Manila may be accidental victims of violence associated with Philippine factional disputes both in demonstrations before the election and at the polls. This same risk is faded by US military personnel in the Clark Field area of Central Luzon.

c. Philippine Government officials may be injured or killed in demonstrations in Manila but any attempt at a local coup is improbable and would, in any event, be unsuccessful.

Deputy Assistant Director
Reports and Estimates

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GENERAL

The approaching national elections in the Philippine Republic, in which three rival political factions are bitterly involved, will be accompanied by outbreaks of lawlessness throughout the area. Illicit firearms are plentiful in the Republic and the strong sentiments connected with the election contest make sporadic incidents of violence a certainty. No general uprising is anticipated, however.

PROSPECTS IN MANILA

While violence and demonstrations both before election day and at the polls are probable in Manila, the local police, recently reinforced by troops of the Philippine Constabulary, are believed capable of keeping such incidents in hand. The possibility remains, however, that US bystanders may find themselves accidentally caught in the crossfire, although there is no reason to believe that the US personnel or property will be selected targets for violence. Some Philippine Government officials may be injured or killed either in demonstrations or as a result of politically-motivated assassinations. While it is possible that the elections could serve as the signal for an attempted coup aimed at the Government's Manila headquarters, likelihood of such an action appears remote. The Philippine Government, disturbed both by Communist support for the major opposition candidate, Jose Laurel, and by reports of increased Communist-led Huk infiltration into Manila, has recently undertaken a series of raids in an effort to break up Huk concentrations, prevent terrorism during the elections and uncover any subversive plots. To date, the Manila raids have not resulted in the capture of Huk leaders, although the authorities claim to have unearthed documents encouraging a popular uprising against the Government. Any such coup attempt, it is believed, would be extremely short-lived, since it would lack popular support, and since Government troops would be able to restore authority quickly.

PROSPECTS OUTSIDE MANILA

Simultaneous with the Government raids in Manila, a general anti-Huk campaign has been launched in central Luzon, the terrorists' traditional stronghold. No reports of the success or failure of the Government's provincial campaign have yet been received. US military personnel in the Clark Field area of central Luzon have long been exposed to Huk raids and have been robbed and ambushed en route to and from the airfield. Such attacks are expected to continue but there are no indications that they will be stepped up because of the impending election. Elsewhere in the Philippines, the likelihood of incidents involving US citizens is remote.